

By STUART EARP

Wycombe Wanderers 2,
Oxford City 1

DESPITE creating a host of scoring chances, Wycombe Wanderers ran out only narrow winners over Oxford City on Tuesday night at Loakes Park when they staged their first ever outing in the Shaw and Kilburn Floodlit League.

Facing an Oxford side from a division lower in the Isthmian League and containing only a handful of first teamers, the Blues struggled to produce positive football despite dominating the game territorially.

There was only one new face in the Wanderers side, Richard Strong, who has been playing for Flackwell Heath this season. A big, tall defender, Strong looked a little slow at times but was full of confidence. Wycombe also gave most of their squad a game by resting one or two regulars.

At times on Tuesday, Wanderers were in full flow with excellent first time passing putting Oxford firmly on the rack. But as the game wore on, the home side made more and more passing mistakes while some players tried to take matters into their own hands by going it alone. It did little to raise hopes for tomorrow's (Saturday) vital league visit to Enfield.

Forcing nine corners in the first 30 minutes, Wanderers put themselves well on top but chances went begging and some fine goalkeeping by third string Steve Mayhew kept them at bay.

The Blues eventually found the target twice in two minutes. First goal came in the 40th minute when Alan Phillips, who had earlier missed an open goal, made no mistake with Howard Kennedy's free kick, sending in a clever header past Mayhew. Then Kennedy made the most of some poor City defensive work to send a gentle back header into the net.

Farouk Quraishi had one lovely run in the second half but poor passing brought a premature end to many attacks. Wanderers were crying out for someone to stay on the flanks where there were acres of space. Instead they bunched in the middle like wasps round a jampot.

Oxford's diminutive winger Ken Uzzell showed how dangerous a genuine winger can be. His exceptional pace and skill on the ball gave several Wycombe defenders problems and Bob Davies had to be at his best to contain him.

City, whose work rate was excellent throughout the second half, received their reward in the 85th minute when John Maskell pushed a corner to Brian Thomas who gratefully drove the chance home.

Derek Harris, who had a most disappointing game, was robbed of a certain goal in the last minute when Mayhew flung himself at the striker's feet to block a full-blooded shot.

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell; R. Davies, R. Strong, A. Phillips, S. Vaas, G. Mackenzie, J. Priestley, F. Quraishi; D. Evans, D. Harris, H. Kennedy. Subs P. Spittle, A. Horseman (not used).

OXFORD: S. Mayhew; M. Teeling (sub. M. Beyland, 57 mins), A. Barney, N. Sergeant, W. Tucker (sub K. Dempsey 32 mins); S. Massey, D. Barney, B. Thomas, P. Dallaway, M. Prescott, K. Uzzell.

Half-time: 2-0. **Goalscorers:** Wycombe — Phillips (40), Kennedy (42). Oxford — Thomas (85).

Referee: P. Lamourne (H. Wycombe).

WYCOMBE Wanderers, currently third in the table, face easily their most difficult test of the season tomorrow (Saturday) when they travel to Enfield, the Isthmian League Premier Division leaders.

Blues manager John Reardon is giving no secrets away in his selection and will choose from a full strength squad minus two players on holiday. One of them is Mick Holifield who has been badly missed recently. It was due to Holifield's absence and the drop in form of Graham, Mackenzie and Farouk Quraishi that the manager switched Paul Birdseye to midfield last week.

Whether he retains Birdseye in midfield remains to be seen but Mr Reardon also has a problem selecting his goalkeeper with John Maskell now back to fitness.

Whatever the team, Wycombe will have to produce their best form since they beat Staines 3-1 last month, if they are to hold Enfield who have quickly established themselves as the team to beat in the Premier Division. They have lost only once this season and that was an early 2-1 reverse at Walthamstow. They haven't lost since August 23.

New signings this season include Terry Moore, goalkeeper, defender Keith Ely and Nick Glover from Tooting. Tony Bass is top goalscorer and came on as substitute to score his 13th of the season in giving Enfield a 2-1 win at Barking on Tuesday. Former Wycombe striker Keith Searle has only bagged three.

On Monday Wanderers travel to Southall for another Isthmian League game. Southall have only two wins from 13 games and will be facing Derek Harris whom they sold to Wycombe a month ago.